HIMALAYAN NATURE

ANNUAL REPORT

2024/2025

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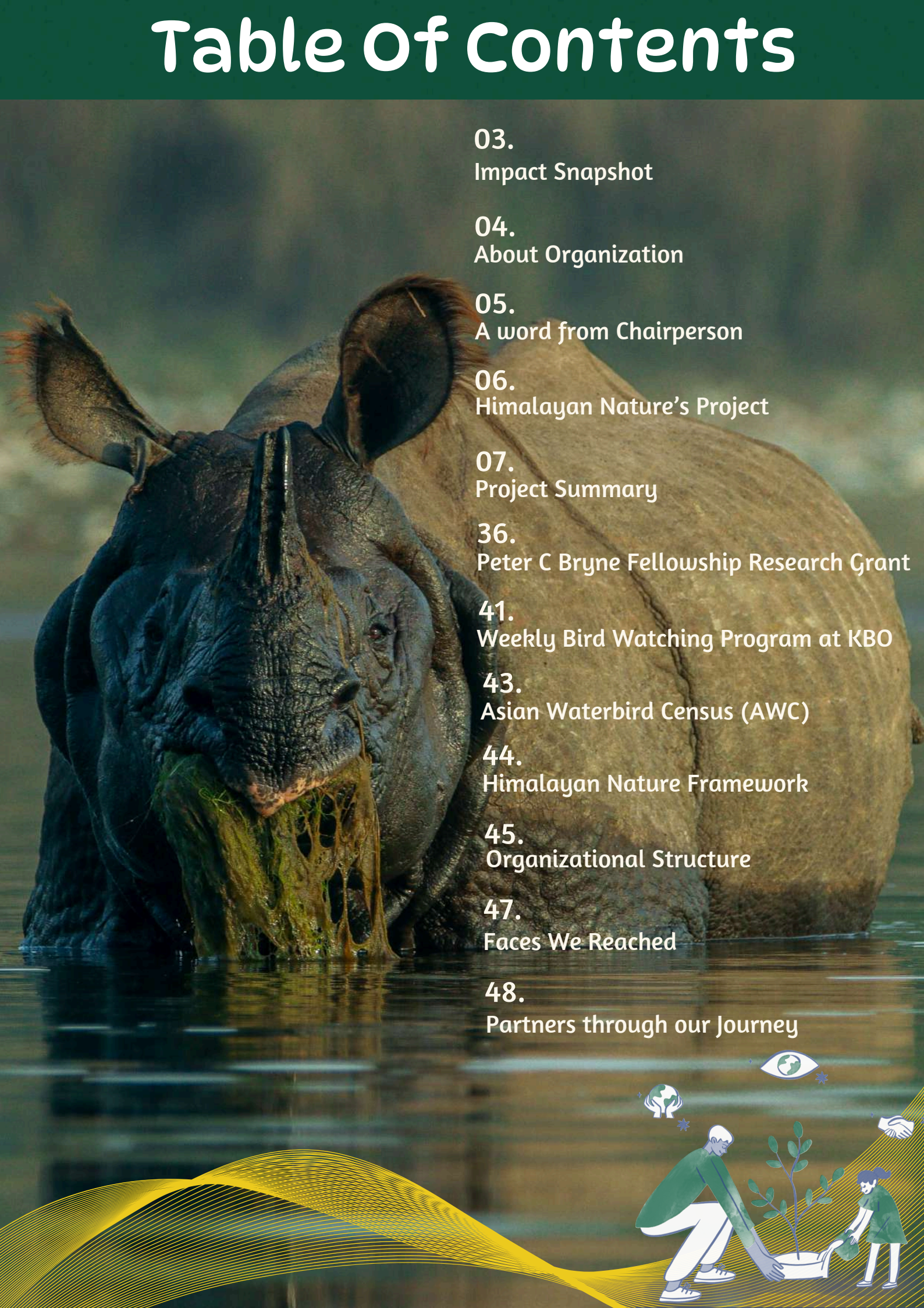


Every species safeguarded, every habitat restored, and every wetland preserved is a step toward a future where humans and wildlife thrive together in harmony.

A YEAR WITH UNIQUE CHALLENGES

Impact Snapshot

9
COMMUNITY BANK

814
DIRECT BENEFICIARIES-INCOME GENERATION ACTIVITIES

8.3 millions
INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY BANK

>1,000
CAPACITATE-ALTERNATE LIVELIHOOD

>8,000
CONSERVATION OUTREACH PROGRAM

>1,500
INTERACTION AND WORKSHOP

45
CITIZEN SCIENTISTS

HIMALAYAN NATURE

Himalayan Nature

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

ABOUT US

Himalayan Nature is a national, non-profit organization working across Nepal to advance research, conservation, and public awareness of the country's rich natural heritage. Built on a strong scientific legacy, the organization is supported by internationally renowned scientists with decades of experience in the natural history of the Himalayan region.

Guided by collaboration and knowledge sharing, Himalayan Nature works closely with national and international research and conservation partners to complement efforts, exchange data, and strengthen collective impact. A core priority is to regularly publish and disseminate its findings, ensuring that scientific evidence informs the public, practitioners, and policymakers on critical environmental and wildlife conservation issues. Headquartered in Kathmandu, Himalayan Nature operates a dedicated field research hub—the Koshi Bird Observatory (KBO)—located at the edge of the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve in eastern Nepal. Looking ahead, the organization envisions expanding its research footprint by establishing additional field centers across Nepal, including in the high Himalayan landscapes.

Himalayan Nature warmly welcomes collaboration, support, and recommendations that can help further its mission of safeguarding Nepal's biodiversity for generations to come.

OUR VISION

We envision Himalayan communities living in harmony with nature, where biodiversity is valued, sustainably managed, and passed on to future generations. Himalayan Nature is dedicated to exploring and documenting the rich natural history of the Himalayan region, generating scientific knowledge that informs conservation action and empowers the public and decision-makers alike. Through a participatory and inclusive approach, we strive to promote knowledge-based management of natural resources that places local communities at the center of conservation efforts.

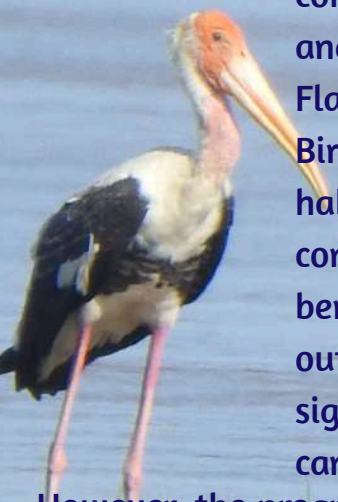
By integrating research, conservation action, awareness raising, capacity building, and strong networks, Himalayan Nature works to safeguard biodiversity while simultaneously enhancing sustainable livelihoods for Himalayan communities.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Prioritize and implement biodiversity conservation programs that provide tangible benefits to local people and improve their living conditions.
- Conduct scientific and participatory research on flora, fauna and ecosystem dynamics.
- Promote meaningful participation and awareness of local people in biodiversity research and conservation.

A WORD FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

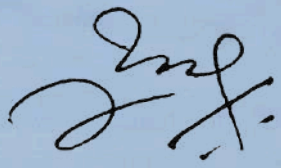
As we reflect on 2024–25, I do so with pride and humility. This has been a defining year for Himalayan Nature, marked by meaningful conservation achievements, institutional growth, and an increasingly complex global context for environmental action. I extend my sincere gratitude to our partners, donors, collaborators, and the dedicated Himalayan Nature team, whose commitment has kept us steadfast in conserving the Himalaya's extraordinary biodiversity. Over the year, we continued to translate science into action across diverse landscapes of Nepal. Through innovative conservation schemes, strengthened research and monitoring, participatory habitat management, and targeted alternative livelihood support for marginalized and forest-dependent communities, we reinforced the vital link between biodiversity conservation and human well-being.



Flagship initiatives—including the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC), the Koshi Bird Observatory (KBO), Special Conservation Sites (SCS), community-led habitat restoration, and youth engagement in species research and conservation, continued to define Himalayan Nature's legacy. These benchmark programs have not only delivered measurable conservation outcomes but have also brought attention to many overlooked yet ecologically significant species, demonstrating that inclusive, science-based conservation can generate impact at scale.

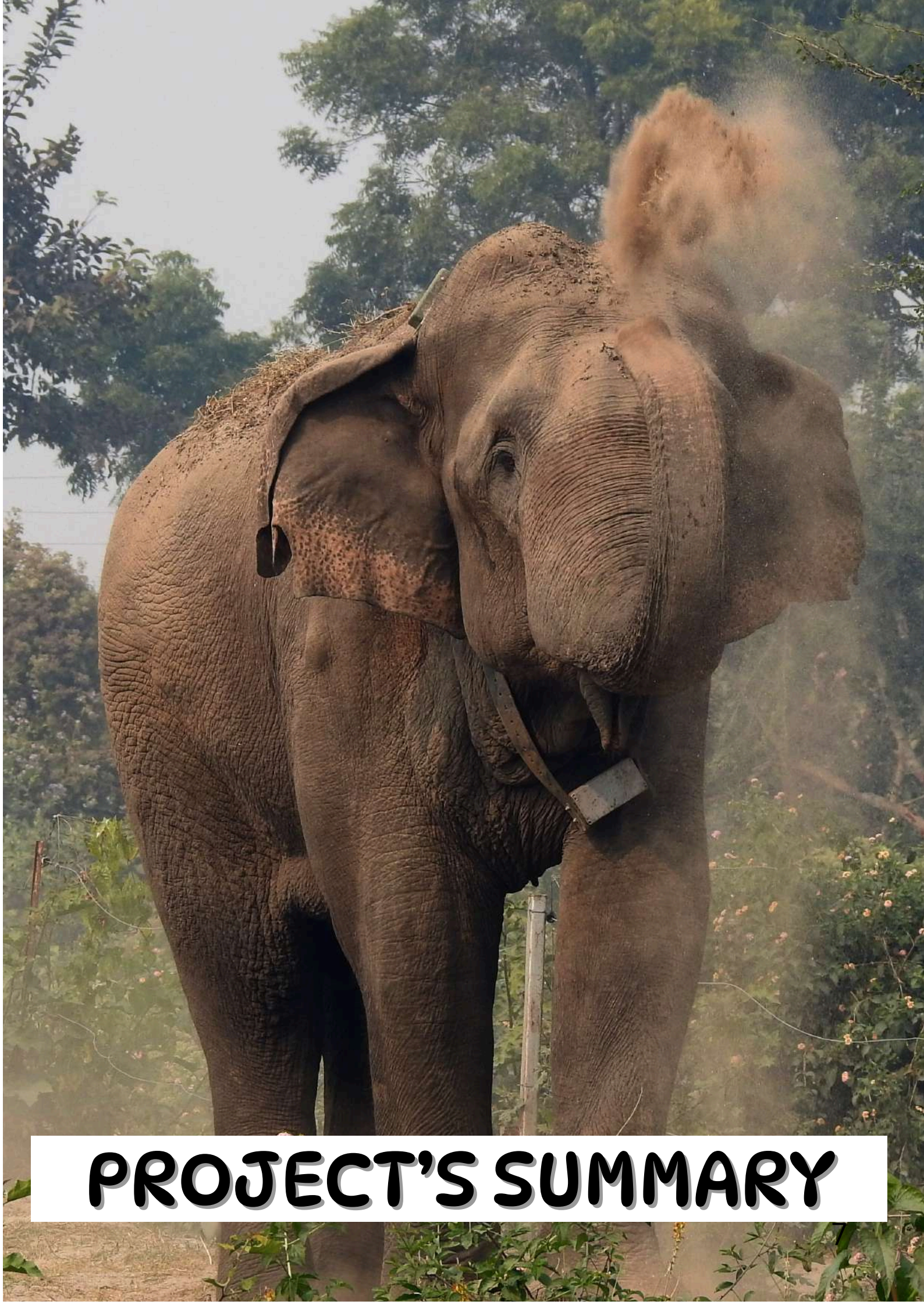
However, the progress we celebrate has not come without challenge. The conservation sector is facing an unprecedented moment. Shortfalls in conservation funding, shifting priorities among funding organizations, and growing geopolitical instability have created uncertainty and constrained long-term planning. At the same time, habitat degradation and the rapid rise of Human–Wildlife Conflict have emerged as major threats, putting both biodiversity gains and community tolerance at risk. Sustaining the achievements we have built over decades now demands greater innovation, resilience, and collaboration than ever before. Despite these constraints, Himalayan Nature remained adaptive and forward-looking. Through strong teamwork and strategic national and international partnerships, we continued to deliver impactful interventions and maintain our presence in critical conservation landscapes across Nepal. This collective effort stands as a testament to our shared belief that conservation must endure, even in times of global uncertainty.

Looking ahead, our focus is clear: strengthening integrated habitat management, scaling conflict-sensitive conservation solutions, diversifying funding, and investing in youth, local leadership, and community stewardship. The challenges are real, but so is our resolve. Together, we will continue to protect nature, foster coexistence, and ensure the Himalayan landscape remains a symbol of resilience and hope for generations to come.



HIMALAYAN NATURE'S PROJECT

Projects	Project Site	Funding Organizations
Connecting communities and ecosystems in Shuklaphanta National Park -CONNECT	Shuklaphanta National Park (ShNP)	Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA)
Combating IWT: Strengthening Partnerships and Promoting Resilience of Local Communities	Chitwan National Park	Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund
Habitat Restoration to conserve Vulnerable Greater One-horn Rhino (Rhinoceros unicornis) and support local community livelihood through Nature-Based Enterprises in Chitwan National Park, Nepal.	Namuna Community Forest, Chitwan National Park	SOS-Fondation Segré, IUCN
Supporting transboundary Tiger recovery in Nepal and India, ITHCP III-Phase	Banke, Bardiya and Shuklaphanta National Park	IUCN, KFW
Strengthen community engagement to conserve the Ganges River Dolphin (Platanista gangetica) through a participatory-based approach in the Koshi River, Eastern Nepal	Koshi River, Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve	The Rufford Foundation
Habitat Restoration through Community Participation for Conservation of Chinese Pangolin in Kavrepalanchok district, Central Nepal	Bethanchok Rural Municipality, Kavrepalanchok District	The Rufford Foundation
Investigating Population Status and Prevalent Threats of Endangered Black-bellied Tern along the Koshi River, Nepal	Koshi River, Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve	The Waterbird Society
Supporting the Livelihood of Vulnerable Households Through LPG and Leaf Plate Schemes at Koshi	Jabdi, Barahakshetra Municipality, Sunsari District	The Cooney Investment Account
National Red List of Nepal's Birds		Government of Nepal, Zoological Society of London
Special Conservation Sites (SCS)	Nepal	Himalayan Nature
Weekly Bird Watching Program for the Youths and Students at Kosi Bird Observatory (KBO)	Jabdi, Barahakshetra Municipality, Sunsari District	Himalayan Nature
Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) 2025	National Parks and Wetlands across Nepal	



PROJECT'S SUMMARY

COMMUNITY FINANCING FOR INCLUSIVE LIVELIHOODS AND CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP

The Community Financing Scheme has emerged as a powerful, incentive-based mechanism to strengthen the livelihoods of marginalized and forest-dependent communities while fostering positive attitudes toward biodiversity conservation. Designed to provide access to low-interest loans, the scheme primarily supports economically vulnerable groups—especially women—by enabling them to establish alternative and sustainable livelihood enterprises, cultivate a culture of savings, and reduce dependence on natural resources within and around protected areas.

Communities living along the fringes of protected areas often have limited income opportunities and rely heavily on forest resources for survival. This dependence has historically contributed to human–wildlife conflict, economic vulnerability, and strained relationships with conservation authorities—posing significant challenges to conservation efforts. Recognizing this interconnected challenge, Himalayan Nature, under the IWT, ITHCP-III Phase, and IUCN-supported projects, introduced community-managed financing as a pathway to economic resilience and conservation stewardship.

During the reporting period, a substantial seed fund of NPR 8,033,332 was mobilized and injected into nine women-led savings groups, complemented by regular monthly savings contributions from group members themselves. To date, 814 local people—predominantly women from groups including Namuna (CNP), Chetana (PNP), Kusum (BNP), Radhakrishna Tole, Milan Tole, and Shichai Tole Livelihood Groups (BaNP), have directly benefited from this initiative.

Operating under clearly defined bylaws, each group follows a transparent and rigorous monitoring and evaluation process, ensuring that loans are exclusively invested in alternative livelihood activities. As a result, a total of NPR 11.2 million has been successfully disbursed as loans to group members. The majority of these investments have supported livestock rearing and agricultural enterprises, contributing to income diversification, household food security, and reduced pressure on forest resources.

By empowering women, strengthening local financial institutions, and expanding livelihood options, the Community Financing Scheme has demonstrated its potential to transform conservation challenges into opportunities—creating resilient communities that actively support biodiversity conservation while improving their socio-economic well-

LITTLE POTS






त्रिवेणी उपभोक्ता समिति
Nine Lakh Sixty Thousand Only
9,60,000/-
Nine Lakh Sixty Thousand Only
9,60,000/-

Empowering women's groups toward alternative livelihood

Under the CONNECT, IWT–Tribeni, IUCN, and ITHCP–III phase projects, Himalayan Nature has prioritized gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) by placing women, marginalized, and economically disadvantaged communities at the center of livelihood development in buffer zones and fringe areas of protected landscapes. Beyond increasing household income, these initiatives aim to mainstream women and excluded groups as active economic actors and decision-makers, strengthening their resilience, social status, and overall well-being.

Building on past lessons, the projects recognized that financial support alone cannot ensure sustainable livelihood outcomes. In response, an integrated approach was adopted that combines seed funding with need-based capacity-building and hands-on technical training, enabling beneficiaries—especially women—to transition from traditional, low-return practices to scientific, market-oriented, and diversified livelihood enterprises.

Across the four projects, 267 beneficiaries (CONNECT: 105; IWT–Tribeni: 86; ITHCP–III: 76) were capacitated through tailored trainings aligned with their chosen enterprises. These covered small business and retail management; organic and climate-smart agriculture practices (composting, liquid fertilizer preparation, hotbed techniques, soil sampling and testing); livestock rearing; mineral block production; commercial vegetable farming; and non-farm skills such as beautician services, plumbing, and electrical work. Strong emphasis was placed on inclusive participation, safe learning environments, and equal access to technical expertise for women and disadvantaged groups.

By bridging traditional knowledge with modern scientific practices, the trainings equipped participants to reduce production costs, improve product quality, adopt technology-friendly methods, and compete effectively in local markets. The focus on organic, high-value, and diversified products has enabled women and marginalized households to enhance incomes and move toward economic self-reliance.

Overall, the integrated livelihood and capacity-building support has driven transformational change, empowering women and underprivileged groups to emerge as skilled entrepreneurs and agents of change, while advancing inclusive economic upliftment alongside sustainable conservation outcomes.

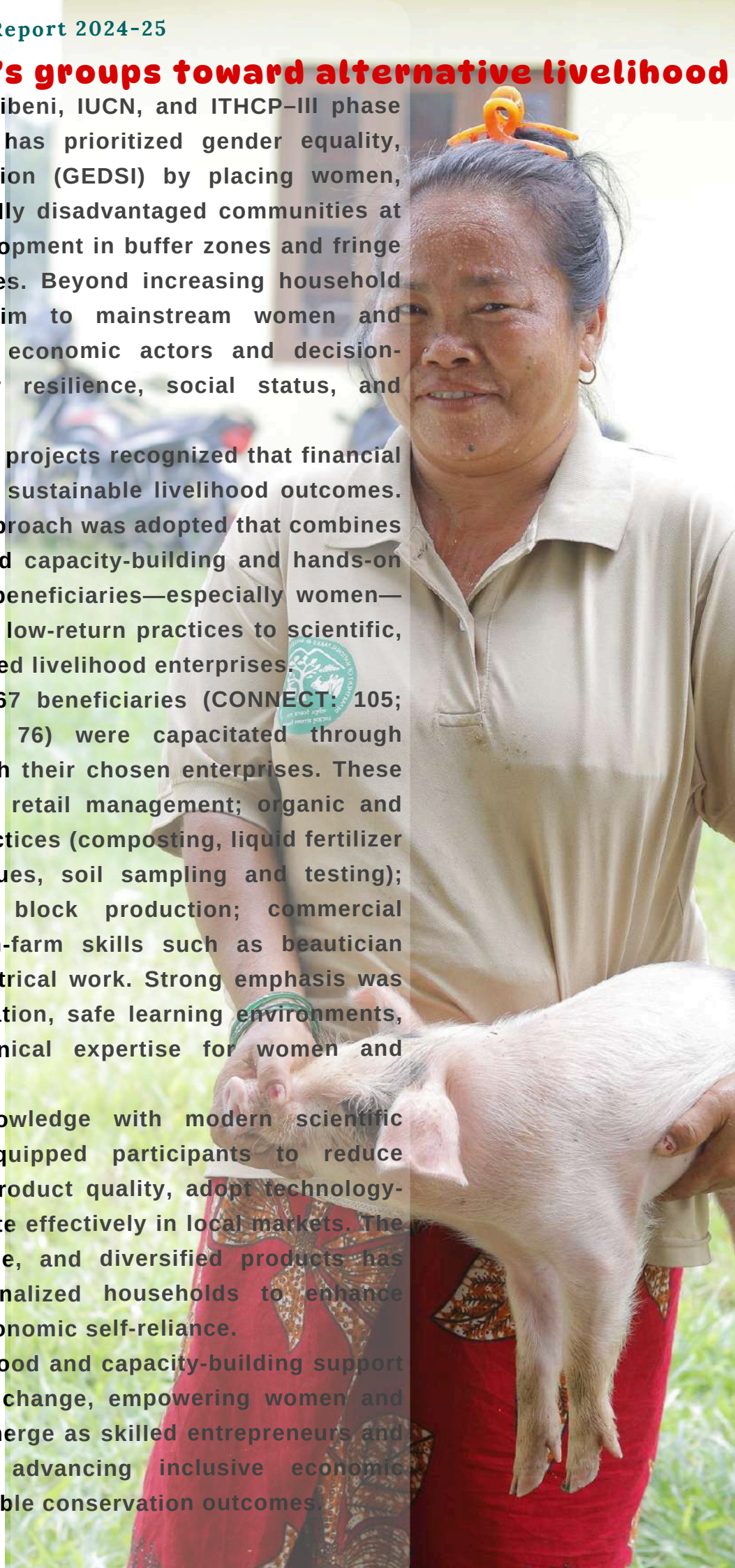


PHOTO GALLERY

Generating Green Jobs

Turning Natural Waste into Livelihood Opportunities through Nature-Based Enterprises

A three-day bio-briquette production training was successfully conducted at Namuna Community Forest, Chitwan National Park, engaging 22 local community members, with priority given to women, marginalized groups, and forest-dependent households. The training promoted nature-based enterprises by transforming invasive plant species, often considered ecological waste, into value-added bio-briquettes. By converting natural products into clean, alternative fuel, the initiative demonstrated a practical Nature-Based Solution that simultaneously addresses environmental challenges and economic needs. Participants were equipped with hands-on technical skills to operate bio-briquette machines and manage small-scale production units, laying the foundation for sustainable, community-led income generation and diversified livelihoods. Beyond livelihood enhancement, the initiative contributes directly to rhino habitat conservation by reducing invasive species pressure on forest ecosystems and minimizing dependence on traditional fuel sources. By linking conservation with enterprise development, the program reinforces a sustainable pathway where biodiversity protection and socio-economic resilience go hand in hand, empowering communities to become active stewards of both nature and their own economic future.

Empowering Communities through Eco-Friendly Leaf Plate Enterprises

Himalayan Nature, in partnership with ZSL Nepal under the ITHCP III Phase project funded by KfW and IUCN, supported 24 beneficiaries from Laxmi and Laligurans Community Forests of the Rajkot Buffer Zone User Groups by providing a leaf plate–making machine alongside targeted skill-based training. Prioritizing women from marginalized and forest-dependent households, the training equipped participants with practical knowledge on machine operation, eco-friendly leaf plate production, basic branding, and market linkages.

By transforming locally available natural leaves into durable, biodegradable products with strong potential to replace single-use plastics, the initiative promotes sustainable, nature-based enterprises while strengthening household income and livelihood diversification. Beyond economic benefits, the program enhances environmental stewardship and community resilience, contributing to reduced resource pressure, improved human–wildlife coexistence, and long-term conservation outcomes.

Enhancing Nature Guiding Skills for Sustainable Tourism and Conservation

Recognizing the pivotal role of well-trained nature guides in promoting sustainable tourism and conservation, Himalayan Nature, with financial support from SOS-IUCN-Fondation Serge, organized an extensive refresher training for 22 professional nature guides in collaboration with Lamichaur BZUC, Namuna Community Forest, and Jatayu Restaurant. The training was designed to strengthen technical expertise, practical skills, and eco-friendly guiding practices, focusing on:

- Advanced guiding techniques and guest handling for enriched visitor experiences.
- Communication and interpretation skills to effectively convey conservation messages.
- In-depth knowledge of local flora and fauna, including hands-on learning in the field.
- Floral and fauna identification techniques, guided directly by experts.
- Promotion of responsible and environmentally friendly guiding practices, ensuring minimal impact on natural habitats.

To further support their professional growth, participants were provided with educational materials, field gear, and resource books, helping them stay updated with new information and improve their overall guiding proficiency. By investing in the capacity building of nature guides, this initiative not only enhances visitor experiences but also strengthens community-led conservation efforts, empowering guides to act as ambassadors for both biodiversity protection and sustainable tourism.

HIMALAYAN NATURE

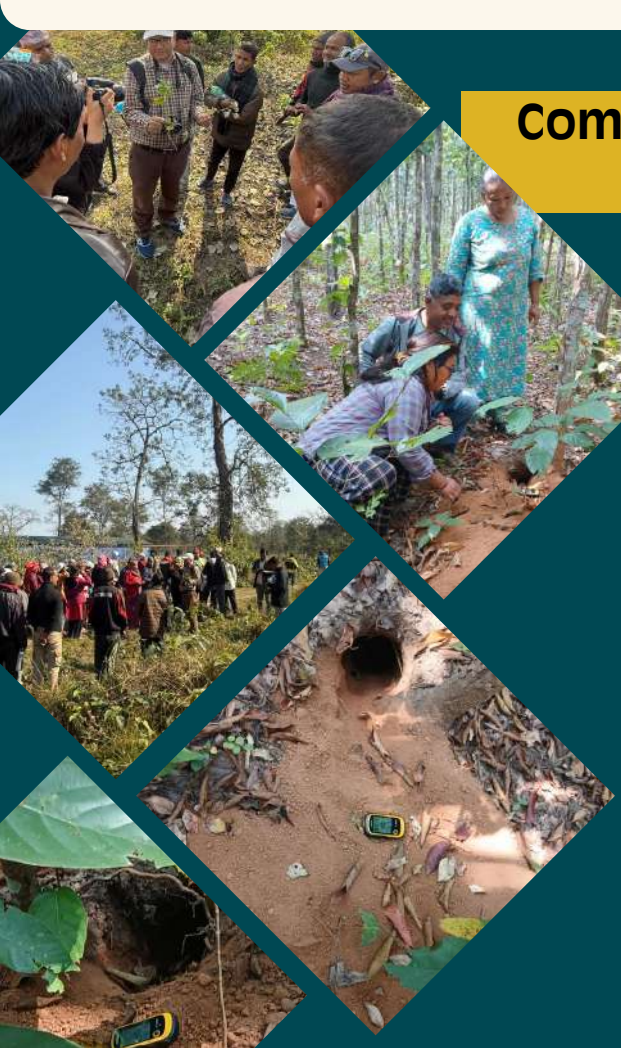
Grassland and IAS management Training

Community engagement is the cornerstone of sustainable conservation, fostering biodiversity, stewardship, and long-term ecological resilience. Recognizing this, Himalayan Nature has actively promoted community-based habitat management to strengthen both forest ecosystems and local livelihoods. Namuna Community Forest, under the Lamichaur BZUC, has historically served as a vital refuge for diverse wildlife, including the endangered rhino, with its rich riverine forests, floodplains, and productive grasslands. However, the forest is increasingly threatened by Invasive Alien Species (IAS), which now occupy over 40% of the area, reducing critical resources for herbivores and altering the ecosystem balance.

To tackle this challenge, with financial support from Fondation Serge, Himalayan Nature organized a two-day comprehensive IAS and grassland management training for 65 local forest users. The training focused on:

- Identification of invasive species and understanding their ecological impacts.
- Effective habitat restoration techniques to revive native flora and maintain resource availability.
- Hands-on removal exercises, reinforcing practical skills and teamwork.
- Safety protocols and first aid, ensuring participant well-being during fieldwork.

Beyond technical skills, the training fostered community ownership, stewardship, and cohesiveness, encouraging local forest users to actively manage and protect their natural resources. By restoring grasslands and managing invasive species, the initiative is expected to enhance wildlife habitat, provide ample natural resources, and reduce human-wildlife conflicts over time, benefiting both the ecosystem and surrounding communities.



Community-Led Conservation: Safeguarding Pangolins for a Safer Future

This World Pangolin Day, Himalayan Nature celebrates the remarkable achievements of our community-led pangolin conservation initiative, supported by the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) project, ZSL-Nepal. Even more than a year after the project's completion, local communities in the Chetana Buffer Zone Community Forest, Parsa National Park, remain actively engaged in protecting pangolins, regularly monitoring habitats and ensuring a safe, secure environment for these vulnerable species.

By taking ownership of conservation efforts, the community not only provides safer habitats for pangolins but also plays a critical role in discouraging illegal wildlife trade, acting as constant guardians and champions for these elusive animals. Their ongoing dedication demonstrates how empowered, informed, and engaged local people can sustain conservation impacts far beyond project timelines.

This inspiring commitment highlights the transformative power of trust, collaboration, and local stewardship, proving that conservation succeeds when communities are at its heart. Heartfelt appreciation goes to all the community members whose persistent efforts are helping pangolins and other wildlife thrive, paving the way for a future where humans and wildlife coexist in harmony.

Incentive-based Conservation Approaches

Himalayan Nature has actively supported alternate livelihood opportunities for marginalized communities across multiple Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs), aiming to reduce dependency on forest resources while fostering stewardship, economic growth, and coexistence with nature.Under the Rajkot and Asaregaudi BZUCs, 24 goatlets and one seed goat were distributed to the Kusum Livelihood Group, and healthy, genetically improved goats were provided to improve productivity, profitability, and income generation. Similarly, the Hattithala Alternative Livelihood Sub-Group under Bedkot BZUC received 10 goat lets, 2 seed goats, and essential farming equipment—including a Rotavator, chaff cutters, plastic tunnels, and electric paddy threshers—enabling diversified, communal farming practices. Office materials, such as tables, cupboards, and chairs, were also provided to support smooth day-to-day operations. To promote nature-friendly enterprises, a leaf plate-making machine was installed at the Laxmi Community Forest Hall, allowing the community to produce eco-friendly products with added value, while ensuring easy market access and wider community use.

Recognizing aquaculture as a key income source in Shuklaphanta National Park, the CONNECT project supported the Beldadi Madhyawarti Machhapalan Krishak Samuha with NPR 208,500 worth of high-quality fingerlings, including Rohu, Naini, Bhakur, and various carp species, across 947 Katha of pond area. This intervention enhanced productivity, profitability, and sustainable fish farming practices, tailored to local needs. Collectively, these initiatives diversify livelihood enterprises, improve economic status, promote sustainable practices, and foster community ownership, ensuring that conservation and development go hand in hand.

Strengthening Law Enforcement Capacity to Combat Wildlife Crime

SAWEN, in collaboration with ZSL Nepal and Himalayan Nature, and with support from the IWT Challenge Fund, delivered a six-day intensive training to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to prevent, investigate, and prosecute wildlife crime. Held in Sauraha, Chitwan, a strategic hub for field-based learning, the training brought together 25 frontline officers (20 male, 4 female) from Protected Areas and Division Forest Offices across high-risk provinces (Madhesh, Bagmati, Gandaki, and Lumbini), where illegal wildlife trade is most prevalent. Blending theory with hands-on practice, the program featured 23 sessions led by 13 experts, equipping participants with practical tools, legal knowledge, and investigative skills. Comprehensive training materials, including updated laws and regulations (Acts and Regulations, 2080), CITES references, and a training manual, supported learning. Pre- and post-training assessments demonstrated a significant uplift in participants' knowledge and operational readiness.

Key Outcomes & Positive Impacts

- Enhanced capacity of LEAs to detect, investigate, and prevent wildlife crime through improved strategies, intelligence-sharing, and inter-agency coordination.
- Strengthened case documentation and evidence handling, leading to better legal outcomes and prosecution success.
- Improved skills in crime scene management, suspect interviewing, seizure procedures, and linking evidence to arrests.
- Increased proficiency in wildlife parts and products identification, forensic applications, and cyber-enabled wildlife crime investigations.
- Greater understanding of policy frameworks, institutional roles, and gaps in IWT control in Nepal.
- Reinforced commitment to human rights–based investigations and awareness of financial crimes, including money laundering linked to wildlife crime.

Transboundary Coordination on HWC and IWT

A Nepal–India transboundary coordination meeting was held in Tribeni, Binayi, Tribeni–06 to strengthen cross-border collaboration on Human–Wildlife Conflict (HWC) and Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT). The meeting enabled information sharing on current challenges, fostered local-level cooperation, and explored mechanisms for sustained community-based communication. The meeting brought together 28 participants from National Parks, Buffer Zone institutions, Nepal Police, Valmiki Tiger Reserve, and Eco-Development Committees from both countries. Technical inputs and open discussions highlighted conflict hotspots, key species, trafficking routes, existing gaps, and stakeholder roles.

Key outcomes included agreement on the need for regular coordination, commitment to quarterly meetings, and consensus to establish an online communication platform with designated focal persons, laying the groundwork for stronger, sustained transboundary cooperation to reduce HWC and curb IWT.

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

Himalayan Nature supported the establishment of a Human–Wildlife Conflict (HWC) Learning Center at the Tribeni Buffer Zone User Committee (BZUC) office in Tribeni Bazaar, Binaya Tribeni–6, Nawalparasi (Ba.Su.Pu). Located just 3 km from Chitwan National Park and within a major transit hub for local and Indian visitors, the center fills a critical gap by providing the area's first dedicated platform for HWC awareness and learning. The existing building was renovated and equipped with essential furniture and educational resources, including books on HWC mitigation, wildlife conservation, and relevant laws and policies, along with posters, brochures, and information boards. These materials offer practical guidance on conflict prevention, safety measures, and sustainable protection of crops, livestock, and property. The center has been well received by key stakeholders—including the National Park, BZUC, Buffer Zone Community Forests, Community-Based Anti-Poaching Units, and local government—who are actively promoting its use. By strengthening knowledge, preparedness, and coexistence practices, the HWC Learning Center enhances community resilience and fosters a balanced relationship between people and wildlife. Himalayan Nature will continue to support the center based on community needs and visitor feedback.

BEFORE RENOVATION

AFTER RENOVATION

COMMUNITY-LED HWC MITIGATION COMMITTEES IN CNP

Himalayan Nature facilitated the formation of HWC Mitigation Sub-Committees under Daunnedevi and Tribeni BZUCs to strengthen community-driven responses to Human–Wildlife Conflict (HWC).

Recognizing the vital role of local communities in managing conflict hotspots, the committees were formed through a consultative process with BZUCs, Buffer Zone Community Forests (BZCFs), and Community-Based Anti-Poaching Units (CBAPUs).

Each BZUC requested nominations based on criteria such as residence in conflict-prone areas, conservation experience, availability for field action, and knowledge of local HWC issues. Formal meetings at Tribeni and Daunnedevi BZUC offices established two 11-member sub-committees, attended by 49 participants (43 male, 6 female), including project staff. Committee roles, responsibilities, and HWC mitigation planning were clearly defined and endorsed.

Key Outcomes

- Institutionalized community leadership in HWC mitigation.
- Strengthened coordination among BZUCs, BZCFs, and CBAPUs.
- Enhanced community ownership and preparedness for HWC response.

These committees mark a significant step toward sustainable, community-led coexistence between people and wildlife in Chitwan.

Participatory-based Grassland Management

Himalayan Nature, in close collaboration with Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUCs), is leading a large-scale, community-driven effort to restore and safeguard critical habitats for Nepal's flagship wildlife species. More than 100 committed forest users from community forests surrounding Chitwan, Banke, Bardia, and Shuklaphanta National Parks are actively engaged in restoring over 250 hectares of degraded habitat through participatory, science-based management practices, prioritizing manual removal of IAS, uprooting, pruning, and cutting of sapling and pole-sized trees.

Protecting and Restoring Critical Habitat for Flagship Species

With generous financial support from IUCN SOS – Fondation Segré, IUCN, and ZSL Nepal, this initiative addresses one of the most pressing conservation challenges: the rapid spread of invasive alien plant species, which pose a serious threat to native biodiversity and wildlife habitats. Restoration activities include systematic uprooting and pruning of invasive plants, as well as controlled burning, to facilitate the regeneration of native vegetation and improve overall habitat quality for wildlife.

A glimpse of hope and a positive outlook in the grassland ecosystem and habitat dynamics are now being witnessed due to the untiring efforts of the dedicated team. Once covered with IAS, the regeneration of native grass has been recorded, rewarding the payoff to the hard work put in these months. From the existing situation, the avenue looks promising to bring even more impactful efforts in the grassland and the conservation of the wild fauna, including rhino, through collaborative efforts from all key stakeholders

Beyond ecological restoration, the initiative strengthens local stewardship and ownership, empowering communities as frontline conservation partners. By combining traditional knowledge with technical guidance, the program contributes to healthier ecosystems, enhanced wildlife habitats, and long-term conservation outcomes—ensuring that both nature and communities thrive together for generations to come.

Community-led Habitat Restoration

Restoring Critical Wetlands to Secure Water for Wildlife

Himalayan Nature, in close collaboration with the respective National Parks and Buffer Zone institutions, successfully restored two critical water bodies in ecologically significant landscapes of Chitwan National Park and Shuklaphanta National Park, strengthening habitat quality and water security for wildlife.

Under the ITHCP–III Phase Extended Project, Himalayan Nature partnered with the Betkot Buffer Zone User Committee (BZUC) to construct a new water hole in the foothills of the Churia range within Shuklaphanta National Park. This landscape lacks permanent water sources due to its fragile Churia geology, yet it serves as an important habitat and movement corridor for elephants, tigers, and ungulates, as well as other resident and migratory wildlife. The newly constructed water hole is expected to provide a reliable, year-round water source, supporting wildlife survival during the dry season while enhancing the overall ecological integrity of the area.

Similarly, in Chitwan National Park, Himalayan Nature supported the restoration of Century Ghol, under the Lamichaur BZUC, in collaboration with Namuna Community Forest. Restoration activities focused on the removal of invasive plant species, strengthening wetland boundaries, and excavation of accumulated earthy materials to improve water retention during the monsoon season. The wetland, which previously lacked a permanent water source, is a key habitat for several keystone and threatened species.

The restoration and expansion of both wetlands have significantly improved water-holding capacity and habitat suitability, particularly during the dry months when water scarcity poses a major challenge to wildlife. These interventions are expected to enhance ecosystem resilience, support a diverse range of faunal species, and reinforce the role of wetlands as lifelines within protected landscapes. Importantly, these achievements also demonstrate the power of community-led, locally driven conservation, successfully attracting broader institutional collaboration beyond the project's original scope.

HWC MITIGATION MEASURES

Predator Proof Corral (PPC)

Field observations and community consultations consistently revealed that most households living near national parks rely on agriculture and livestock rearing as their primary sources of income. However, recurring livestock depredation by tigers, leopards, and other large carnivores has placed significant economic strain on these families. In many cases, such incidents have triggered retaliatory responses against wildlife, further escalating conflict.

These events have become more frequent as people and carnivores increasingly share the same landscapes and compete for limited resources. With rising carnivore populations across protected areas, the risk of livestock losses—and the associated tension between communities and wildlife—continues to grow.

To help reduce these conflicts, Himalayan Nature, in collaboration with conservation partners, supported the construction of 201 Predator-Proof Corrals (PPCs) across high-risk buffer zone areas in Chitwan, Banke, Bardia, and Shuklaphanta National Parks. PPCs were built in Tribeni (26), Daunne Devi (26), Rajkot (10), Asaregoudi (30), Bedkot (20), Shovatal (30), and Kalikich-Bageshwori (28) BZUCs. Through multiple projects, a total investment of NPR 6,030,000 was made for PPC construction, with 40% contributed directly by the projects. Priority was given to households that had already suffered livestock losses, as well as those identified as poor, vulnerable, or economically marginalized.

By securing livestock and reducing night-time predation, PPCs are helping communities safeguard their livelihoods, reduce retaliatory killings, and strengthen coexistence with Nepal's large carnivores.

Lighting Up for Coexistence-Installation of Solar Lamp Post

A major milestone in promoting human–wildlife coexistence has been achieved in the buffer zones of Shuklaphanta National Park with the installation of 35 solar lamp posts in identified human–wildlife conflict (HWC) hotspots across four municipalities: Bedkot, Shuklaphanta, Beldandi, and Bhimdatta. This initiative is part of the CONNECT Project, implemented by Renewable World with financial support from Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA) and 50% matching contributions from the respective municipalities.

The lamps were strategically installed based on prior assessments identifying high-risk HWC locations. Specifically, 8 lamps were installed in Bedkot BZUC, 10 lamps in Shuklaphanta Municipality (evenly split between Sundevi and Trishakti BZUCs), 10 lamps in Beldandi Municipality (5 each in Kalikich and Bageshori BZUCs), and 7 lamps in Shuklaphanta BZUC of Bhimdatta Municipality. These sites are particularly vulnerable to nighttime wildlife movement, including elephants, tigers, and leopards, which often result in crop damage, property loss, and safety risks for local communities.

The primary objective of this intervention is to reduce human–wildlife conflict by enhancing nighttime visibility in high-risk areas. The solar lamps help deter wildlife from approaching settlements, reduce surprise encounters, and allow communities to safely monitor animal movements. Beyond improving human and livestock safety, this initiative contributes to wildlife conservation by minimizing retaliatory actions against animals.

This activity demonstrates the power of collaborative conservation, combining international support, local governance, and community planning to achieve a shared goal: safer communities and thriving wildlife. By leveraging sustainable energy solutions, we are paving the way toward a future where humans and wildlife coexist harmoniously.

HWC MITIGATION MEASURES

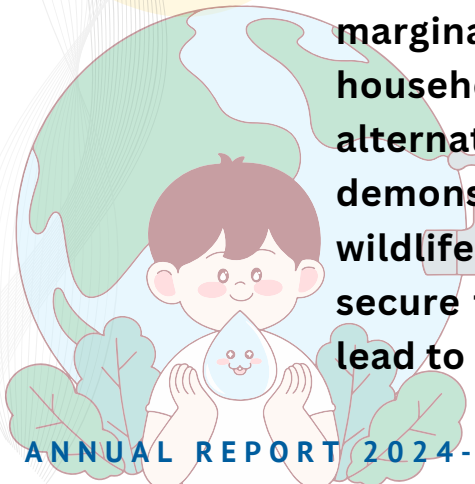
QUICK RELIEF FUND

The Quick Relief Fund (QRF) was established across multiple landscapes to provide immediate support in cases of human casualties, addressing delays and documentation challenges in government compensation processes. To date, a total of NPR 1,975,000 has been allocated through various projects in locations including Lamichaur BZUC (CNP), Rajkot and Asharegaudi BZCF (BNP), Bedkot BZCF (ShNP), and Prakashpur BZUC (KTWR). During unforeseen incidents, affected individuals can access the fund for urgent medical treatment, with reimbursements to the fund made once government compensation is received. Beyond providing timely relief, the QRF fosters positive community engagement, encourages local ownership of conservation initiatives, and strengthens long-term collaboration between communities and conservation actors, supporting both human welfare and biodiversity conservation.

ALTERNATE CROPPING

Crop depredation is a persistent challenge for communities farming near forest edges, where wildlife frequently enters fields and causes significant economic losses and threats to food security. In response, many farmers in HWC hotspot areas across Nepal have begun shifting from traditional crops to alternative, non-palatable crops such as ginger, turmeric, citrus, chilies, medicinal and aromatic plants, and even beekeeping. These crops are far less attractive to wildlife, offer higher market value, and have already shown encouraging results in reducing damage.

Recognizing the effectiveness of this approach, Himalayan Nature has supported alternative cropping initiatives under various projects across multiple protected areas. To date, we have engaged over 100 farmers, prioritizing marginalized, forest-dependent, and conflict-affected households and distributed 1,000 saplings of high-value alternative crops to promote this transition. Early outcomes demonstrate a significant reduction in crop damage, as wildlife largely avoids these species, helping communities secure their livelihoods while reducing pressures that often lead to human–wildlife conflict.



DISTRIBUTION OF ALTERNATIVE COOKING ENERGY SOURCES

Communities living in the buffer zones of Nepal's protected areas continue to rely heavily on nearby forests for their daily energy needs, particularly for fuelwood. This long-standing dependency not only accelerates habitat degradation but also increases the likelihood of encounters between people and wildlife, especially when community members enter forests to collect firewood. Addressing these basic household energy needs is therefore essential to achieving broader goals of conservation, sustainable development, coexistence, and safeguarding community wellbeing. Through the CONNECT and IWTCF projects—successfully distributed 700 Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) and associated support materials to marginalized, vulnerable, and forest-dependent households across eight communities in the buffer zones of Chitwan National Park (CNP) and Shuklaphanta National Park (ShNP). The initiative was implemented in close collaboration with CNP, ShNP, ocal governments, BZUCs, and SADA whose technical and financial support was pivotal. This intervention was designed to:

- Reduce pressure on forest resources by promoting energy-efficient cooking technologies.
- Minimize human–wildlife conflict (HWC), especially incidents occurring during fuelwood collection.
- Improve indoor air quality and family health, with significant benefits for women who spend more time near cooking smoke.

These technologies offer multiple long-term benefits: they decrease dependence on forest products, reduce household smoke exposure, lower health risks, and contribute to sustaining wildlife habitats. Through this incentive-based approach, both projects aim to create lasting positive impacts for people and nature—supporting threatened species, protecting critical habitats, and building safer, more resilient communities. We extend our sincere appreciation to all partners and participating communities for making this collective effort possible.

NATURE-BASED ENTERPRISES

Bio-Briquettee Production

Forest User Groups from the Namuna Community Forest in Pithauli continue to lead innovative efforts in sustainable resource management. By producing bio-briquettes from materials collected through the control of Invasive Alien Species (IAS), the groups are converting previously unused forest biomass into an environmentally friendly energy source. This initiative supports rural households by reducing reliance on firewood, while also contributing to habitat restoration and climate-smart conservation. It demonstrates a model where communities play a central role in promoting both environmental protection and improved local livelihoods.

Beyond generating a renewable energy alternative, the intervention contributes directly to rhino habitat conservation and socio-economic development. By transforming invasive species into valuable products, pressure on natural resources is reduced, wildlife habitats are protected, and new livelihood opportunities are created. Furthermore, the training events have strengthened community ownership, skills, and cooperation—supporting long-term sustainability.

This collaborative effort represents a meaningful step towards a more sustainable future for both communities and wildlife. We sincerely acknowledge and appreciate the commitment of all partners and stakeholders who have contributed to this important initiative.

Leaf-Plate Production

Himalayan Nature, in collaboration with ZSL Nepal under the ITHCP III Phase Project funded by KfW and IUCN, supported beneficiaries of the Laxmi and Laligurans Community Forests under the Rajkot Buffer Zone User Groups by establishing and operationalizing a leaf-plate making machine unit. This initiative included a comprehensive series of capacity-building activities, with priority participation from women belonging to marginalized and forest-dependent communities. The training emphasized technical operation of the leaf-plate machine, including installation procedures, machine handling, safety measures, and step-by-step leaf-plate production. In addition, participants were introduced to business development components such as market linkages, branding, storage procedures, and enterprise management.

The initiative aims to enhance local economic resilience through nature-based livelihood opportunities while contributing to reduced human–tiger conflict and fostering community coexistence in buffer zone areas. A business plan has also been developed to offer a clear operational roadmap for the enterprise moving forward. Through this intervention, communities are not only equipped with the necessary technical skills to operate the machine but are also encouraged to build sustainable conservation-friendly enterprises that benefit both people and the ecosystem.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN CONSERVATION THROUGH ART COMPETITIONS

Inspiring young minds to champion species conservation remained a key focus of the project this year. Recognizing that today's youth are tomorrow's environmental stewards, the project placed strong emphasis on nurturing responsible citizens who value wildlife and actively contribute to conservation efforts. Art, as an expressive and universally accessible medium, served as a powerful tool to capture young perspectives on the protection of Nepal's iconic species and their habitats.

Under the youth-led theme "Inspiring Young Minds for Species Conservation," a series of art competitions were organized across Koshi and Chitwan. More than 300 students from over 30 schools took part in six competitions, each centered around the theme of Species and Habitat Conservation, with a particular focus on the Ganges River Dolphin, One-horned Rhinoceros, and Pangolin. Through their illustrations, students reflected their understanding of the species' ecological significance, the threats they face, and the urgent need to safeguard the ecosystems they depend on.

The competitions witnessed enthusiastic participation, demonstrating the growing awareness and curiosity of young learners toward biodiversity conservation. School administrations played a crucial role, providing strong support and acknowledging the project's efforts to promote conservation education—particularly the advocacy for dolphin protection within their local context.

To celebrate creativity and encourage continued engagement, winners were awarded medals, certificates, and species-themed merchandise. These recognitions not only motivated students but also reinforced positive attitudes toward wildlife conservation.

The youth art competitions proved to be an impactful platform for conservation outreach. They strengthened collaboration between schools and communities, amplified key conservation messages, and helped cultivate the next generation of informed and passionate conservation advocates. Through the powerful medium of art, young participants contributed meaningfully to raising awareness and promoting a culture of respect for Nepal's threatened species and their habitats.

YOUTH-LED STREET DRAMA FOR CONSERVATION

River Dolphin Conservation

As part of the River Dolphin Conservation Project, a student-led drama initiative was introduced to inspire young audiences and build advocacy for freshwater biodiversity. Two drama events were conducted in local schools to enhance understanding of the River Dolphin's ecological role, the threats it faces, and the urgent need for conservation action. Designed to move beyond facts, the performances fostered empathy and encouraged students to see the dolphin as a symbol of healthy river ecosystems.

The project team supported the entire process, developing an engaging, locally relevant script, guiding rehearsals, and training student performers. A group of 10–15 students in each school participated in practice sessions to refine their storytelling and deliver a compelling message. The performances attracted more than 250 students, teachers, and school staff. Through relatable scenes and character-driven storytelling, students vividly illustrated real conservation challenges and practical solutions to protect the River Dolphin and its habitat. The locally tailored narrative made the drama both meaningful and accessible to the audience.

Feedback was highly positive, with viewers highlighting the drama's educational value, creativity, and entertainment. Beyond raising awareness, the activity empowered participating students by strengthening their confidence, communication skills, and conservation knowledge. It also encouraged them to take ownership of key messages, helping them become ambassadors for river health within their communities. This initiative not only elevated the River Dolphin's profile as a flagship species but also helped nurture a new generation of environmentally conscious youth committed to safeguarding freshwater ecosystems.

Fostering Empathy for Wildlife and Reducing Human–Wildlife Conflict Through Street Drama – Shuklaphanta National Park

To strengthen community awareness and inspire responsible coexistence with wildlife, street drama events were organized in collaboration with Shuklaphanta National Park (ShNP) and the Rudradhoj Battalion of the Nepal Army. Performed across Saraswoti and Bhanu Higher Secondary Schools in the park's buffer zone, the dramas highlighted pressing conservation issues, including illegal activities, human–wildlife conflict (HWC), and practical mitigation measures.

The performances, enacted by trained Nepal Army personnel, attracted a strong audience—546 students from Classes 8–12 (Bhanu: 376; Saraswoti: 170) and an additional 160 parents and community members. Their participation created an interactive platform to communicate real-life challenges and encourage community-led solutions in conservation.

Each event combined a conservation awareness session, complete with a slide presentation, a compelling street drama, and the distribution of educational materials to reinforce learning. The approach successfully enhanced understanding of anti-poaching measures, HWC prevention, and the role of youth and local communities in sustaining the park's biodiversity. The activities are expected to help cultivate more positive attitudes toward wildlife and strengthen community stewardship in Shuklaphanta National Park.

Building on this momentum, a group of local youths from the buffer zone is currently preparing another street drama to be showcased during Wildlife Week at the park headquarters in Majhgaun. This upcoming performance will further emphasize reducing human–wildlife conflict, curbing illegal activities, and deepening collaboration between communities, youth, and conservation initiatives.

YOUTH IN RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION

River Dolphin Conservation Project

The Koshi River is one of Nepal's most important freshwater ecosystems and a critical habitat for the endangered Ganges River Dolphin. Increasing human pressures, including unsustainable fishing, water pollution, habitat modification, and rising dependence on river resources, have intensified threats to dolphin populations, particularly along the upstream and downstream stretches of the river. To address these challenges, Himalayan Nature, with support from The Rufford Foundation, is implementing the River Dolphin Conservation Project in collaboration with KTWR, NTNC, community-based organizations, schools, and river-dependent communities. The project follows a science-based and community-centered approach, generating updated data on dolphin populations, threats, water quality, and prey availability to strengthen conservation planning. Simultaneously, it empowers local communities by training selected members as River Guards to support regular monitoring and promote local stewardship. Complementing field-based actions, the project prioritizes education and outreach by engaging students and community members through participatory awareness programs. By enhancing ecological understanding, fostering conservation ethics, and promoting responsible river use, the initiative aims to build a supportive social foundation for the long-term conservation of river dolphins and the freshwater ecosystems they depend on.

Building Local Capacity through the River Guard Approach

Himalayan Nature's River Guard initiative has successfully developed skilled local manpower by selecting 10 individuals from fishing and river-dependent communities to actively participate in river dolphin conservation. This approach strengthens local ownership, ensures consistent field data collection, and bridges community knowledge with scientific research, fostering long-term commitment to aquatic biodiversity protection.

A two-day intensive training equipped participants with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective monitoring and conservation. The first day focused on theoretical learning, covering river dolphin ecology, conservation significance, legal frameworks, community roles, and scientific survey methods. The second day emphasized hands-on field training, where participants practiced using GPS devices, binoculars, cameras, telescopes, and water quality testing kits along the Koshi River, identifying dolphin habitats, recording observations, and completing data sheets under supervision.

The training was further enriched by mentorship from local biodiversity experts and partner organizations, highlighting the importance of community-led stewardship and practical conservation strategies. By building local capacity, the River Guard program not only supports ongoing research and monitoring but also strengthens community engagement, outreach, and conservation leadership. Equipped with knowledge, skills, and a sense of responsibility, these River Guards are now pivotal actors in the long-term protection of the endangered Ganges River Dolphin and its freshwater ecosystem.

River Dolphin Habitat Monitoring

Trained River Guards are now playing a pivotal role in safeguarding river dolphin habitats through regular, systematic monitoring carried out in close coordination with key conservation stakeholders. Their field-based work documents dolphin sightings, habitat conditions, and emerging threats, generating reliable, real-time information to guide conservation action.

A major conservation breakthrough was the confirmed sighting of a Ganges River Dolphin in the upper stretch of the Koshi River, nearly 30 km upstream of the Koshi Barrage near Madhauban an area previously considered largely inaccessible due to the barrage. This landmark record provides compelling evidence of the species' wider distribution and movement potential, reshaping current understanding of dolphin habitat use in the Koshi River system. These findings highlight the effectiveness of community-led monitoring and the critical role of River Guards in delivering actionable data. By strengthening knowledge on dolphin presence and threats, the initiative is directly informing adaptive management strategies and reinforcing long-term efforts to conserve river dolphins and their freshwater habitats.

River Dolphin Conservation Project

River Dolphin Survey and Threat Assessment

A pre-monsoon survey of the Koshi River was successfully conducted, covering both the upper (Rajabas to Koshi Barrage) and lower (Koshi Barrage to Gobargada) sections, to assess the status of the endangered Ganges River Dolphin (Platanista gangetica) and evaluate habitat conditions and threats.

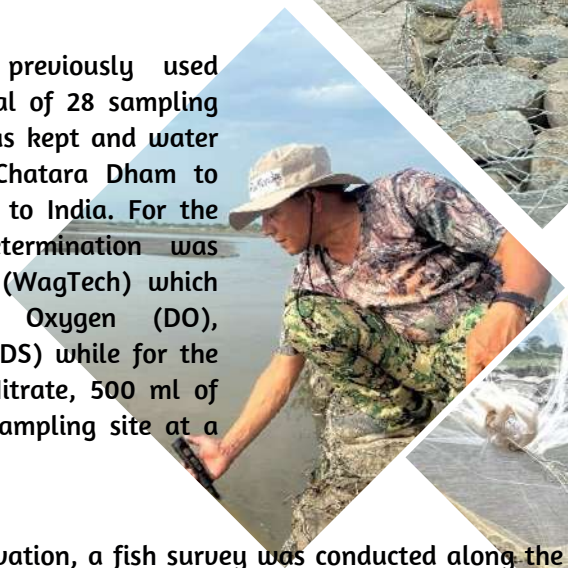
The survey combined boat-based and shore-based methods. On boats, a seven-member team monitored ecologically important areas—deep pools, bends, and confluences—recording habitat type, water depth, sighting distances, and human activities. Simultaneously, a shore-based team of 12 observers stationed at 200-meter intervals near the Koshi Barrage conducted two days of systematic monitoring.

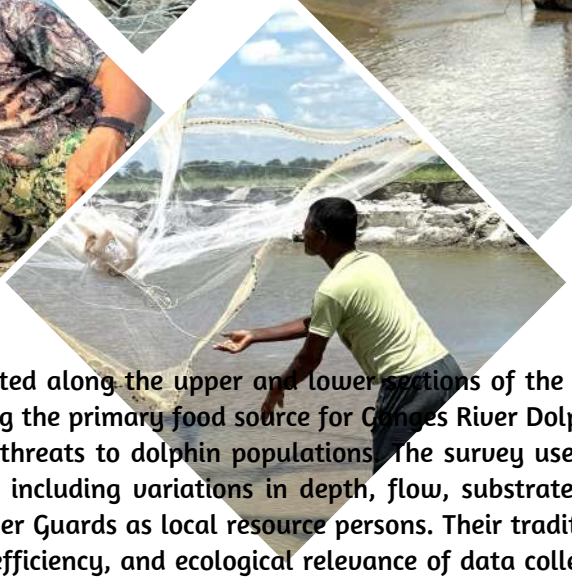
Survey results recorded 22 dolphins—15 adults, 5 sub-adults, and 2 juveniles—all in the downstream section. No dolphins were sighted upstream, aligning with previous findings.

The survey also highlighted key threats, which appear to be intensifying:

- Illegal fishing has increased, with more participants using modern gear.
- Habitat encroachment due to agricultural expansion along riverbanks.
- Plastic pollution and general waste, including single-use bottles, have risen.
- Emergence of informal waste dumping sites near dolphin habitats.

These findings underscore the need for continued monitoring, stronger community engagement, and targeted interventions to mitigate threats and protect river dolphin populations in the Koshi River.





Water Quality Assessment

To collect the water sample, the previously used methodology was followed, where a total of 28 sampling point at the interval of at least 2 km was kept and water sampling was taken accordingly from Chatara Dham to Gobargada, nearby international borders to India. For the physio-chemical parameter, in-situ determination was carried out using multi-meter test kits (WagTech) which include temperature, pH, Dissolved Oxygen (DO), conductivity and Total Dissolved Solid (TDS) while for the Phosphorous, Free Co2, Potassium and Nitrate, 500 ml of water sample was collected from each sampling site at a depth of about 0.5 m.

Prey Species (Fish) Survey

As a critical component of dolphin conservation, a fish survey was conducted along the upper and lower sections of the Koshi River to assess prey diversity, abundance, and habitat suitability. Fish, being the primary food source for Ganges River Dolphins, provide key insights into ecological health, habitat quality, and potential threats to dolphin populations. The survey used ten strategically selected permanent plots representing diverse habitat types, including variations in depth, flow, substrate, and riparian features. A unique feature of the study was the engagement of River Guards as local resource persons. Their traditional knowledge of fish species, habitats, and behavior enhanced the accuracy, efficiency, and ecological relevance of data collection while fostering community awareness and stewardship. Fish sampling employed locally accessible and traditional methods—gill nets (0.1–2.5 cm), cast nets (4–7 mm), hook lines, and indigenous traps (Dadiya)—deployed at different times of day over five consecutive days per site. All activities followed catch-and-release protocols under DNPWC guidelines, with specimens photographed for documentation before release. Species identification combined local expertise and standard references (Shrestha 1981, 1994, 2019; Jayaram 2013; Jhingran & Talwar 1991), resulting in a record of 35 fish species across the study sites. These findings highlight the ecological richness and prey availability in the Koshi River, providing a baseline for monitoring changes over time, identifying critical habitats, and informing adaptive conservation strategies.

Safeguarding Chinese Pangolin

Habitat Restoration through Reforestation

Reforestation is a key strategy for restoring degraded habitats, enhancing biodiversity, and supporting ecosystem services in community forests. Himalayan Nature implemented reforestation activities in Kolbhanjhyang, Dhadkoban, and Silingebhir Community Forests to replenish native vegetation lost to deforestation, overgrazing, forest fires, and infrastructure development.

Over 50 members of local Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) planted 1,200 native saplings, including Pinus roxburghii, Prunus cerasoides, Rhododendron spp., Alnus nepalensis, Choerospondias axillaris, and Schima wallichii, in coordination with the Sub-division Forest Office, Khopasi, Kavrepalanchok. These native trees provide critical habitats and food for species such as the Chinese Pangolin. Additionally, fodder species saplings were distributed to CFUGs to support sustainable community forestry practices. This program strengthened community engagement, restored ecological integrity, and contributed to long-term biodiversity conservation in the region

World Pangolin Day Celebration

Himalayan Nature celebrated World Pangolin Day to raise awareness about the conservation of this critically endangered species and highlight its ecological importance. Marking the 13th Pangolin Day, the event was organized in collaboration with the Thumki Community Forest Users Group, Panauti Municipality-11, Kavrepalanchok. The celebration included a one-hour interactive session with 24 participants (6 male, 18 female), where key topics such as pangolin ecology, threats, and conservation measures were discussed. Following the discussion, participants took a short field visit within Thumki Community Forest to learn about pangolin habitats, burrow types, and forest ecology firsthand. The event successfully engaged the local community, promoted hands-on learning, and reinforced community stewardship for pangolin conservation. The celebration also received coverage in local newspapers, further extending awareness about the species and its protection.

Opportunistic Camera Trap Survey

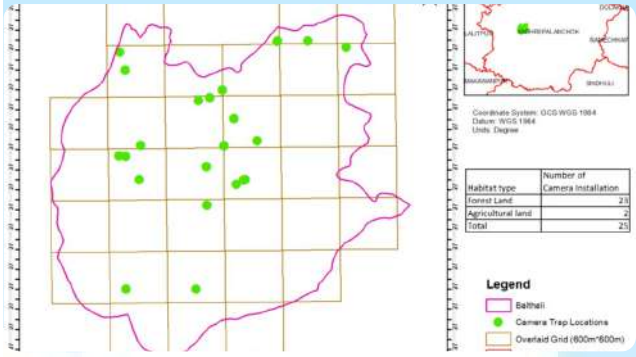
An opportunistic camera trap survey was conducted in the community forests of Panauti Municipality-11, Balthali to study the movement patterns of the Chinese Pangolin. A total of 25 camera traps were strategically placed at fresh pangolin burrows identified through intensive field surveys, covering mixed-evergreen forest, pine forest, and adjoining agricultural lands. Cameras remained active for at least 15 days at each site to maximize the chances of capturing pangolins. Two cameras were set in farmlands near the forest, while the remaining 23 cameras were deployed within the community forests. Over the survey period, the cameras captured 4,103 photographs, recording Chinese Pangolins at three locations, along with eight other mammal species. This survey provided valuable insights into pangolin presence and habitat use, demonstrating the effectiveness of community forest landscapes in supporting Chinese Pangolin conservation and broader mammalian biodiversity.

Safeguarding Chinese Pangolin

Field Survey on Chinese Pangolin Distribution

A field survey was conducted to assess the distribution and abundance of Chinese Pangolin following the Pangolin Monitoring Guideline for Nepal (2019). The block/strip line transect method was employed, using 34 grids (600m x 600m) as sampling units. Within each grid, up to three transects (600m x 50m) were randomly laid in potential habitats. Given the species' nocturnal and elusive nature, indirect signs—primarily burrows—were used as key indicators of presence. Surveys also recorded scats, footprints, scales, and scratch marks, along with habitat parameters such as altitude, slope, aspect, canopy cover, ground cover, dominant vegetation, soil type, and presence of ant and termite colonies. GPS coordinates were noted for all signs.

A total of 552.58 ha was surveyed, resulting in the identification of 270 burrows—105 fresh/new and 165 old. Most burrows (84.4%) were in forested areas, with 15.6% in agricultural lands. Elevations ranged from 1,391 to 1,685 m, with 66.7% between 1,401–1,500 m. The majority of burrows (67.4%) were found on 25–45° slopes, under 26–50% forest canopy (47.4%) and 26–50% ground cover (50.4%). Around 78.1% of burrows were near ant or termite mounds, 71.9% were in brown soil, and the highest numbers were on southeast (34.4%) and east (24.8%) aspects. These results indicate that Chinese Pangolin burrow occurrence is strongly influenced by elevation, slope, aspect, canopy and ground cover, soil type, habitat, and proximity to ant and termite mounds, highlighting critical habitat characteristics for targeted conservation and management.



Establish two community information centers in the community school

Two libraries of Shreeram Secondary School and Shree Kamaladevi Janapriya Secondary School in Panauti Municipality were developed as community information centers for awareness raising of the project and the benefits of Chinese Pangolin in long run. These information centers were supported with different educational materials such as conservation-related books, story books related to wild flora and fauna, brochure, posters related to pangolins and other wildlife. More than 40 books and educational reading materials were handed to the respective school's principal.

Result Sharing Workshop

Upon completion of the project, a result-sharing workshop was held in Panauti Municipality-11, Balthali, Kavrepalanchok to present findings from the project "Habitat Restoration through Community Participation for the Conservation of Chinese Pangolin." The workshop was attended by 28 participants, including representatives from the Sub-division Forest Office-Balthali, local municipal officials, community school teachers, and members of the Community Forest Users Group. The session highlighted the project activities, survey results, and provided a broader overview of the conservation needs and prevailing threats to the Chinese pangolin in the area, fostering awareness and stakeholder engagement for ongoing protection efforts.

Community Awareness Program

Empowering Communities for Wildlife Conservation

Himalayan Nature has consistently strengthened community outreach programs, recognizing local people as critical partners in conservation. This year, awareness initiatives focused on key issues such as River Dolphin conservation, habitat restoration, Human–Wildlife Conflict (HWC) management, and flagship species protection including Pangolin, Tiger, and Greater One-Horned Rhino, emphasizing ecosystem-level conservation and coexistence.

The programs were designed to be context-specific, addressing local perspectives, social dynamics, and cultural nuances. A total of 39 events engaged 1,956 participants (824 male, 1,132 female) across HN project sites. Each session covered species ecology, prevailing threats, HWC mitigation, relevant legislation, community roles, and conservation opportunities. The participatory approach ensured attendees could relate to the content, actively discuss challenges, and adopt practical strategies for conflict prevention and wildlife protection. By empowering communities with knowledge, skills, and confidence, these programs contribute to safer environments for both people and wildlife, promote sustainable conservation practices, and build enduring local stewardship across the landscape.

Key Impacts

- Enhanced community knowledge and awareness on species and habitat conservation.
- Promoted positive attitudes towar wildlife and long-term coexistence.
- Strengthened local support for conservation initiatives, enabling communities to act responsibly and share information within their networks.
- Fostered inclusive engagement, recognizing the vital roles of both men and women in safeguarding natural resources.

School Awareness Program

Engaging Young Minds: School Education Programs for Conservation Awareness

Himalayan Nature's school education programs aim to instill a lasting conservation mindset in children, emphasizing the value of biodiversity and the importance of coexistence with wildlife. By engaging young learners early, these programs seek to reduce future threats to wildlife and foster active stewardship of natural resources. The programs, conducted across protected areas from Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve in the east to Shuklaphanta National Park in the west, reached 45 schools and 3,554 students (2,004 male, 1,550 female). Each session employed participatory methods, ensuring students could actively engage with the material. Activities included interactive presentations, videos, pictorial illustrations, and animations to effectively convey key messages.

Programs focused on the ecology, behavior, conservation status, threats, and mitigation strategies for flagship and keystone species such as the River Dolphin, Tiger, and Greater One-Horned Rhino. Students learned not only about wildlife but also about HWC management, biodiversity conservation, and the role of youth in safeguarding natural resources.

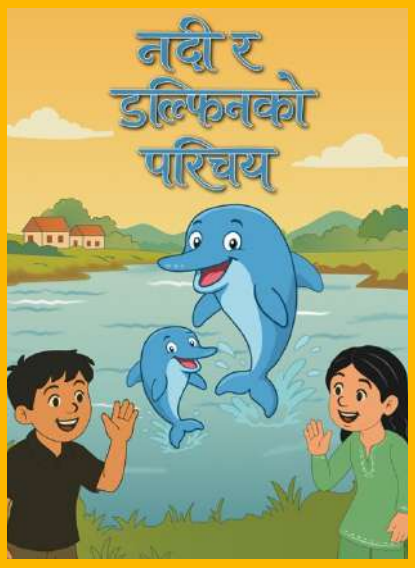
The approach emphasized active learning, encouraging students to ask questions, share ideas, and envision their role in conservation efforts. The enthusiastic participation observed at each event reflects the program's success in raising awareness, shaping positive attitudes, and motivating the next generation to contribute to biodiversity conservation. The program has successfully sensitized young minds to biodiversity conservation, fostering knowledge, curiosity, and long-term commitment to protecting wildlife and natural habitats.

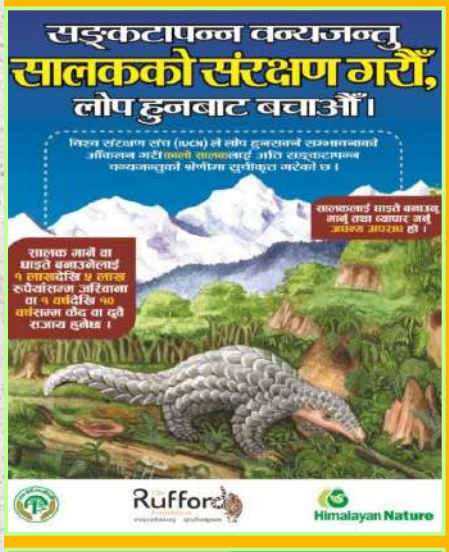
EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Himalayan Nature recognizes that effective communication is key to fostering awareness and positive attitudes toward wildlife conservation. To this end, a diverse range of educational materials has been developed and distributed, including storybooks, brochures, posters, laminated boards, mounted displays, animated videos, murals, wall paintings, and other audio-visual tools. Visual and interactive materials have proven particularly effective in rural communities, where illustrations and memorable quotes help reinforce conservation messages over time.

Murals and wall paintings featuring flagship and threatened species such as Tigers, Pangolins, River Dolphins, Elephants, and Rhinos, serve as powerful tools to promote human-wildlife conflict (HWC) mitigation and long-term coexistence. Designed primarily in Nepali, these materials are culturally relevant, accessible, and resonate strongly with local communities, ensuring that messages are understood and acted upon.

Educational contents are deeply rooted in real-life experiences and observations from their natural habitat, where possible link to actual characters from local communities to enhance authenticity and connection. The content and storyline incorporate conservation gaps, risks, and challenges encountered during fieldwork, prioritizing pollution, habitat degradation, natural resource exploitation and unsustainable fishing practices, making the narrative both educational and grounded in reality. Each subject for the educational materials has been carefully chosen to reflect the relevance and urgency of species conservation, while fostering empathy and responsibility among the targeted groups like local communities, students, key stakeholders etc. Beyond just a story, these materials provide in-depth ecological knowledge about the flagship species like rhinos, tigers, river dolphins, pangolins, its behavior, threats to its survival, and the role of local communities in its protection. By combining factual information with compelling storytelling, these materials serve as a powerful educational resource to build awareness, shape attitudes, and inspire conservation action among the next generation. In collaboration with National Parks, buffer zones, community forests, and local stakeholders, Himalayan Nature has strategically installed signage, murals, and information boards across Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Chitwan National Park, Banke National Park, and Shuklaphanta National Park. Locations were carefully selected based on public flow, key biological areas, and conflict hotspots to maximize visibility and impact. These educational initiatives enhance public understanding of wildlife, promote conservation-friendly behaviors, and foster a positive perception of wildlife among communities, contributing to long-term protection of species and habitats.





DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The distribution of visually engaging educational materials such as brochures, posters, stickers, leaflets, and animated videos has significantly strengthened the reach and impact of conservation awareness efforts. Designed around flagship species including the rhino, tiger, and river dolphin, these materials translate complex conservation messages into clear, attractive, and easy-to-understand formats. By highlighting the ecological importance of these species, the threats they face, and practical actions communities can take, the materials serve as both informative tools and everyday visual reminders. Widely shared among students, community members, and visitors, and displayed in schools, homes, and public spaces, they reinforce conservation messages well beyond formal awareness sessions. Their accessibility, portability, and visual appeal have helped foster lasting impressions, encourage positive behavior change, and build a more informed and supportive community committed to the protection of river dolphins and riverine biodiversity.

16TH INTERNATIONAL VULTURE AWARENESS DAY CELEBRATION – 2024

Himalayan Nature celebrated the 16th International Vulture Awareness Day on 7th September 2024 at the Koshi Bird Observatory, Sunsari, engaging 35 enthusiastic bird-watching students. The event aimed to raise awareness about the status, distribution, ecology, behavior, and threats facing vultures in Nepal, fostering a deeper understanding of their critical role in ecosystems. The celebration featured an art competition, where students showcased their creativity by illustrating vultures. Outstanding participants were awarded prizes, including “Birds of Nepal” books, diaries, and stationery, motivating them to further explore wildlife and conservation. This event successfully combined education, engagement, and creativity, strengthening youth interest in wildlife conservation and promoting long-term community support for vulture protection in Nepal.

PETER C BRYNE FELLOWSHIP RESEARCH GRANT

Peter's lifelong connection to the Himalayas was defined by his dual passion for exploration and conservation. Beginning with his daring expeditions in search of the elusive Yeti in the late 1940s, Peter's adventures spanned from high mountain pursuits to impactful conservation efforts in Nepal's Terai forests. His groundbreaking discovery of Yeti footprints in 1948 and later establishment of a safari company in 1953 marked the start of a remarkable career. A pioneer in wildlife conservation, he co-founded the International Wildlife Conservation Society in 1968 and contributed significantly to the creation of Shuklaphanta National Park. Beyond exploration, Peter was a prolific author whose works on natural history and Himalayan wilderness continue to inspire. His life stands as a testament to curiosity, courage, and commitment to preserving the natural world.

GRANT RECIPIENTS 2024

DISTRIBUTION AND CONSERVATION STATUS OF PANGOLIN (MANIS SPP.) IN SHUKLAPHANTA NATIONAL PARK, WESTERN NEPAL

Aenisha Basnet
Master-Environmental Science
Tribhuvan University

Pangolins (Manis spp.), the world's most trafficked mammals—locally known as Sal-machhli, Sin-machhli, Sil-machhli, and Ban-machha—remain poorly studied in Shuklaphanta National Park (ShNP), Nepal. This research investigated their distribution, habitat preferences, and associated threats across the park's core and buffer zones. Surveys along 16 transects revealed habitats at elevations of 182–268 m with gentle slopes (1–7°), sandy acidic soils, medium canopy cover, and abundant termite mounds. Fourteen old burrows were located at 148–219 m in forested areas with 60–80% canopy cover, sparse ground vegetation, and proximity (50 m–1 km) to termite mounds and water sources—indicating prey and moisture-driven habitat selection. Among 78 respondents, 41% had observed pangolins and 67% recognized their presence, though ecological knowledge was limited. Despite cultural respect for pangolins, major threats included poaching, habitat loss, and weak conservation awareness. Although 74% of respondents knew pangolins are legally protected, 91% viewed current conservation efforts as inadequate. Strengthening habitat protection, law enforcement, and community-based education programs is crucial to ensure pangolin survival in ShNP.

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE OF THARU WITH OTHER ETHNIC GROUP

This study examines traditional healthcare practices among the Tharu, Brahmin/Chettri, Dalit, and Newar/Magar communities in Tikapur Municipality, Kailali District, Nepal, using data from 130 households. It documents extensive use of medicinal plants—primarily leaves, fruits, and seeds—prepared as pastes, juices, and powders. About 32% of respondents combine allopathic and Ayurvedic treatments. Ayurveda, emphasizing balance through natural therapies, remains deeply rooted and complements modern healthcare.

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Reflecting global trends in traditional medicine use, the study underscores its cultural and practical importance, particularly among the Tharu community. It recommends preserving indigenous medical knowledge through community initiatives and integrating traditional healers into the formal healthcare system.

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRANS-BOUNDARY WILDLIFE CORRIDOR FOR THE MOVEMENT OF UMBRELLA SPECIES, A CASE STUDY OF SHIKARIBAS CORRIDOR

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Understanding the movement patterns of key umbrella species: tigers, elephants, and sloth bears, to evaluate the corridor's functional connectivity using the camera trapping methodology. Using field-based data and community insights, the research aims to understand the ecological effectiveness of the corridor in facilitating wildlife movement and sustaining biodiversity across transboundary landscapes.

The study area of this study is the Shikaribas corridor situated in central Terai of the country that acts as a transboundary migration route for wildlife movement across Chitwan national park and Parsa national park of Nepal with Valmiki tiger reserve in India. Shikaribas Corridor has a mosaic pattern consisting of mixed hardwood forests, dry seasonal riverbeds, and restored habitats flanked by agricultural fields and the corridor spans 3.26 square kilometers, with a total forest cover of 1.49 square kilometers. The southern portion of the Chitwan-Parsa-Valmiki Complex, which shares a shared international boundary of about 100 km, is particularly susceptible to illegal wildlife hunting, particularly for bushmeat, as shown by the park authorities' seizure of bushmeat from a variety of species, including sambar, barking deer, spotted deer, and wild boar. Although it is the smallest corridor of the terai-Arc Landscape (TAL), elephant tracks and dunk have occasionally been discovered along the Shikaribas Khola and according to local communities and protected area authorities, the Shikaribas Corridor has served as a migratory path for large carnivores, ungulates as well as pachyderms including elephants and rhinoceroses.

IMPACT OF NILE TILAPIA (OREOCHROMIS NILOTICUS, LINNAEUS, 1758) ON NATIVE FISH SPECIES OF BEGNAS LAKE, KASKI, NEPAL

The study focuses on assessing the ecological impact of Nile Tilapia (Oreochromis niloticus), an introduced species that has become dominant in fish catches across Nepal (Timilsina et al., 2019). The increasing abundance of this non-native species raises concerns about its potential effects on native fish populations within local lake ecosystems.

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Findings from this research aim to determine whether the proliferation of Nile Tilapia is contributing to the decline or possible extinction risks of native fish species. The outcomes are expected to provide critical insights for the formulation of regulatory measures and conservation strategies to safeguard native aquatic biodiversity in Nepal.

Weekly Bird Watching Program at Kosi Bird Observatory (KBO)

The Kosi Bird Observatory (KBO) has been organizing a weekly bird watching and nature learning program aimed at engaging school students, youth and local community members in biodiversity conservation. Every week, more than 20–25 students participate in guided field activities, and to date over 960 young people have joined the sessions. The program has become an important platform for introducing young learners to birds, ecosystems and the importance of protecting wildlife habitats in the Koshi region.

Each session is facilitated by field experts who provide guidance on bird identification, behavior observation and the ecological importance of wetland and forest bird species. Participants are equipped with basic field equipment, including binoculars, datasheets and notebook journals. Students are trained in equipment handling, maintaining bird checklists, GPS coordinate recording and scientific field note-taking. Through these practical learning methods, participants learn to observe responsibly and understand how scientific field data contributes to real conservation efforts. Along with bird watching activities, students actively take part in additional conservation actions such as plantation of native tree species and nature restoration activities around KBO. The participants also join vulture awareness programs, where they learn about the important role vultures play in the ecosystem and the critical need to protect endangered species. Such interactions help students connect broader biodiversity issues with what they observe directly during field visits.

The main objective of the weekly program is to develop skilled local human resources capable of participating in bird research and conservation at the community level. By involving youth regularly in nature-based learning, KBO aims to inspire future conservation leaders, strengthen scientific understanding among local communities, and build long-term awareness about the importance of biodiversity.

In addition to knowledge, the program encourages deeper connection with nature and helps young learners appreciate the unique wildlife heritage of Nepal. Through teamwork, outdoor learning and hands-on experience, the participants develop personal responsibility towards the environment and gain skills that are useful for future academic and conservation activities.

ASIAN WATERBIRD CENSUS (AWC) 2025

In 2025, we proudly mark the 58th year of the global Waterbird Census, which began with its very first count in January 1967. Since then, the census has evolved into one of the longest-running and most reliable monitoring initiatives in the world. Over nearly six decades, this coordinated effort has generated an exceptional body of scientific knowledge on waterbird populations, their distribution, migration patterns, and habitat use. The data collected through this annual census have continuously informed conservation planning, wetland management strategies, and national as well as international policies that support the protection of migratory species and freshwater ecosystems. In many regions, the waterbird census remains the primary evidence base for understanding long-term environmental change, making it invaluable for global biodiversity conservation efforts.

In Nepal, Himalayan Nature (HN) has carried forward this legacy with great dedication. Nepal's participation in the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC) has now completed 36 consecutive years, and moving into the 37th year, the enthusiasm and commitment of Nepali birders remains strong. What makes this achievement especially remarkable is that the census in Nepal is primarily driven by volunteers, especially young conservation enthusiasts, students, and birdwatchers from different provinces. Their involvement has shaped the census into one of the world's largest, long-standing volunteer-based ecological monitoring programs. Each young birder who participates in the mid-winter count becomes part of this globally connected citizen-science network. Their role as citizen scientists is formally recognized, and their observations directly contribute to international waterbird databases and conservation assessments.

The 2025 count commenced on 1 January and continued until 16 January, covering major wetlands, rivers, lakes and reservoirs across the country. Throughout this period, local site coordinators, field experts and trained volunteers are mobilized in teams to record population numbers and species presence following standardized census procedures. This year, more than 350 volunteers are actively participating in the Waterbird Census in Nepal, demonstrating once again the strong national commitment to environmental stewardship and scientific contributions. Their collective effort not only enriches our ecological understanding but also strengthens Nepal's role in global wetland conservation and international migratory bird monitoring initiatives.

Himalayan Nature Framework

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